

# THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

## NEWSLETTER No 123 - January 2010

### CONTENTS

P.2	Officers & Committee members	P.10	Christmas Party photos
P.3	Editorial	P.11	Tower of the quarter; FSG clothing
P.4	2009 AGM and Striking Competition	P.12	Notices & adverts
P.6	Committee meeting; Phyllis's birthday Q's	P.13	Letters to the Editor
P.7	Annual walk	P.14	The President's crossword
P.8	Centenary peal report	P.15	Around the towers
P.9	New FSG web-site; Christmas Party	P.16	Diary of Saturday meetings; Tag End



### THE FOUR SHIRES GUILD

MORETON-IN-MARSH, Gloucestershire – at the Church of St David  
On Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup> 2009, in 2 hours and 41 minutes

#### A PEAL OF 5024 FOUR SHIRES GUILD DELIGHT MAJOR

Composed by: Sabre

Tenor: 10cwt-0qtr-14lb in G

Charles S Wilson (Warks)	1	Mark W Sayers (Warks)	5
Christopher F Mew (Warks)	2	Richard Lewis-Skeath (Glos)	6
Peter J F Quinn (Warks)	3	John W Nicholls (Glos)	7
Christopher M Povey (Worcs)	4	Graham J Clifton (Oxon)	8

Conducted by Christopher F Mew

Rung and named by the band to celebrate the Guild's centenary  
First peal in the method

Four Shires Guild D. Major: x13x14x12x18x14x18.56.12x78 LH12



The triumphant peal band afterwards (note smiles!):-

L to R: Mark Sayers, Chris Povey, Richard Lewis-Skeath, Peter Quinn, John Nicholls, Graham Clifton, Chris Mew, Charles Wilson.

(See full report on p.8)

# Officers and Committee Members of the Guild

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**President**  
Mr John Nicholls

**Guild Master**  
Mr Peter Quinn

**Elected members:-**  
Mr Michael Haynes

Mrs Jackie Hands

**Vice Presidents**  
Mrs Phyllis Brazier

**Ringing Master**  
Mr Steve Bowley

Mr Stuart Cummings

Rev Dr Peter Newing

**Hon Secretary**  
Mr Andrew Gunn

Mr Chris Povey

**Chaplain**  
Rev Patrick Wooster

**Programme Secretary**  
Mrs Sophia Lewis-Skeath

**Child Protection Officer**  
Mrs Sophia Lewis-Skeath

**Accounts Examiner**  
Mr Douglas Carr

**Health & Safety Officer**  
Mr Chris Povey

**Hon Treasurer**  
Mr Mike Rees

**Membership Secretary**  
Mr Peter Kenealy

**Newsletter Team**  
Mr Chris Povey

Mrs Sophia Lewis-Skeath

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NEW FSG WEB-SITE: <http://www.fourshires.org.uk>

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**The deadline for the next issue of the FSG Newsletter (April 2010) is MARCH 13<sup>th</sup> 2010**

This Newsletter survives only because of the contributions you make to it. Without them it will fail. Articles can be submitted to the undersigned via email or to the postal addresses shown above, or to any committee member.

Please contribute something, however small (or large). You would be surprised the things people enjoy reading about. A few suggestions: an historical item; a funny story; a quarter peal report; poems; puzzles; tales, events past and to come; a ringing tour, even! Send them in. They will all be welcome – and photos, too, you'll notice.

.... and don't worry if you think your handwriting is unintelligible. We can normally translate! Just get it to us.

The Newsletter Team: Chris Povey & Sophia Lewis-Skeath

If sending articles by email, please use MS Word (not the dreaded Works) format for written articles, JPG format for photos, and scanned items in PDF or JPG formats. (We have the facility to scan photo prints if you haven't.) Please let us know ownership of photos where relevant for acknowledgement.

## EDITORIAL

Happy New Year! I hope you all enjoyed the Christmas break and that all your ringing was superb. This Newsletter is the last covering events in our centenary year, which was somewhat monumental in containing a number of excellent events. The first was the Centenary Party at Todenham on July 4<sup>th</sup>, which, helped by the fine weather, developed into an enjoyable occasion. The next big event – and it *was* big – was the stand at the Moreton Show, which showed the public at large about English bell ringing. Our Centenary Service and AGM was held amid the magnificence of Pershore Abbey. Then, on November 14<sup>th</sup>, was the peal of Four Shires Guild Delight Major (reported on the front page and page 8). Bringing up the rear on December 19<sup>th</sup> was the Christmas Party, which is reported on pages 9 & 10. Phew: quite a year!

In the last Newsletter's Editorial I signed myself off as 'Guest Editor just this once'. 'Never say never again' comes to mind, as I find myself guest-editing again. Steve Cadd decided to resign as editor just before the last issue appeared, but the timescale involved with that issue was very frantic and it did not seem the right time to publicise this announcement. A proper 'Thank you' can now be given to Steve for all the issues he produced, and for the time and effort he put into the job. It was clearly considerable.

I shall edit on an interim basis (see below), as I feel unable to take the job on long-term. Sophia Lewis-Skeath has offered to assist during this time. Sophia managed all the printing side of the last issue, and helped with proof-reading and other necessary work. I am grateful to her for this offer. Sophia will share any plaudits that arise from producing the Newsletters (but not the brickbats, of course: got to be a gentleman!). I shall edit for 2010, so there will need to be a volunteer for Editor of the Jan 2011 issue onwards. Please start thinking about it now.

Production of the last Newsletter raised two issues that are worth sharing with you. Firstly, I have to apologise to Freda Cleaver and Jackie Hands for failing to include Welford-on-Avon and Lower Quinton on the FSG map. Alderminster went missing, too. I could say I'd heard a rumour these churches were to become redundant, but I am unlikely to be believed! My excuse is rushing the drawing to

meet the Moreton Show timescale. The map has now been corrected and appears on the new FSG web-site.

The other significant aspect is production cost. Last time (Issue 122) we printed 200 copies at cost of about £80, which equates to about 45p/member. This amount is less than the £100 reported at the AGM; and I can assure you this is extremely cheap for copies that contain coloured photos. In fact, it is less than we've been paying in the past for non-colour copies. Now, if as previously we have four issues per year, then the yearly cost of these issues per member is about £1.80 – purely Newsletter costs. This gives a surplus of £1.20 from each £3 membership fee - but of course subs have only just risen to that level. In addition to the Newsletter is the cost of the Public Liability insurance, which is about 58p/member, so the surplus reduces to about 62p/member. The committee have agreed that the Guild's silverware, the total value of which is very considerable, should be insured at a cost of about 35p/member. This reduces the surplus to 27p/member. There are other little bits and pieces that arise from running the Guild, so this surplus reduces even further. Now consider what happens if somebody receives all four issues of the Newsletter, but doesn't pay his or her subscription. All of a sudden, there's a £1.80 deficit, which will wipe out the surplus from at least seven paid-up subscriptions. I hope you can see the simple arithmetic here and the message it's giving. The Guild needs your subscriptions. Yes, the Guild should know who's paid and who hasn't, but there's been some confusion over this in the past. This aspect is currently being addressed and hopefully then we can print the requisite number of copies. Latepayers confuse the situation, so the message arising from all this is: (a) please pay your subs, and (b) please pay as early in the year as possible, so everyone knows what's happening. Also, if you are one of the few that receives their Newsletter by post, this may soon cease unless you pay, or continue to pay, extra for the privilege, because the £3 sub can't sustain this profitably. You will soon have a choice: pay extra to cover the postage, or access the Newsletter via the new web-site.

You will see there's a note by Roland Merrick about the new FSG website (page 9). While a web-site has operated for some time for the

Mid-week Tours, this hasn't included the real business of the Guild. The new web-site will include the Newsletters, so if you prefer to receive your Newsletter in this way (ie save paper, save the planet), please say.

The AGM and Striking Competition went well. Mickleton are to be congratulated on some exceptional ringing and are worthy winners of the Shield. The as-yet unconfirmed AGM Minutes are included here, together with the full Striking Competition results. See page 4

Allen Turner's Guild Walk took place once again, and for the third year in succession enjoyed good weather. Wendy Mace tells us all about it on page 7, together with some photos of what was clearly a very pretty walk.

There was insufficient room in the last issue to include the President's crossword. Unfortunately, you haven't got the Christmas cheer, the roaring fire and the sloe gin to help now, but January's cold nights will still encourage staying-in to complete it. And you may still have some sloe gin remaining....

Lastly, the Guild Annual Dinner will be on February 6<sup>th</sup> at The Falcon Hotel, Stratford. Details are on page 12. Please come!

Chris Povey

PS: this issue is what might be described as a 'bumper' one: 16 pages. This is due to a lot of things happening in a short time: AGM & Striking Comp (once a year), 2 pages; Centenary peal (once in a 100 years), 2 pages; letters (unusually large this time), 1½ pages. That's at least 5 pages extra to the norm. You – yes, you out there - need to help me keep the Newsletter going by submitting articles and whatever; and photos are well worth having. I can only write so much....!

PPS: you will notice some photos have acknowledgments of ownership where known. As the Newsletter appears on the web-site, photos in it can be copied by non-FSG parties for other uses. This does happen, as I've had one photo 'stolen' from another site in this way recently.

(The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Four Shires Guild or its Committee)

Two little gems seen in a Parish Office:

Vicar's Mission Statement:-

THE MAIN THING  
IS TO KEEP  
THE MAIN THING  
THE MAIN THING

and

SIT LONG  
TALK MUCH  
LAUGH OFTEN

# THE 2009 AGM AND STRIKING COMPETITION AT PERSHORE

The 2009 Guild AGM and Striking Competitions were held at the Parish Centre, Pershore, on Saturday October 17<sup>th</sup>, everything being organised outstandingly well by Steve Bowley, our Ringing Master, to whom the success of the day must be attributed. Thank you, Steve. In addition, the weather was very kind. The striking competition took place first, on the back 6 of the Parish Centre's bells. Tea was available at Steve's house only a few paces away, and, as ever, this was a tasty spread.

The Centenary Service was held in Pershore Abbey and was attended by a number of members. Service sheets had been prepared by Steve and this professional touch added to the splendour of our surroundings.

The AGM was held in the Abbey after the Service and was chaired by the President, John Nicholls. Unconfirmed Minutes of this Meeting follow:-

## Minutes of the 2009 Annual General Meeting.

The AGM of the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers was held at Pershore Abbey on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2009 starting at 1722 hrs, with the President John Nicholls in the Chair. About 25 members attended. Prior to the Meeting, the Striking Competition for the Newing Shield and Spencer Jones Cup was held, with three towers entering.

- 1 **Apologies:** Apologies were received from David Adams, Mike and Sally Austin, Freda Cleaver, Bill Sabin, Ken Wakefield and Robin Walker.
- 2 **Minutes of the Last Meeting:** At the request of the President, the Secretary read these out. These were accepted as a true record.

**Matters Arising from the Minutes:** None

**Membership fees:** were discussed. Mike Rees reported that we are running at £100 a year loss, but the reserves would cover two years without any new income. Bill Nash repeated his previous concerns of getting the subs in. It was agreed that it was difficult to raise the subscription amount this year, but that the Committee should look at this matter for the long term.

**Public Liability Insurance:** The Secretary reported that Public Liability Insurance with the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group had been obtained for the Guild. EIG also offer Personal Accident cover to members at an additional amount. John Nicholls said that some of the adjoining Ringing Associations have it as part of their membership and as most members also belong to these, this may not be

necessary, but the Committee would look into it further.

3. **Confirmation of New Members:** The following new members were elected:- David Adams (Moreton). Prop: Peter Kenealy; Sec: Sophia Lewis-Skeath. Anne Stott (Evesham). Prop: Chris Povey; Sec: John Nicholls.
- 4 **President's Report:** John Nicholls felt the Guild is in good health. He reported that the Centenary celebrations at Todenham were a great success, though the incoming towers attendance was a little disappointing initially. He thanked the Guild Master and the Secretary for their organisation. He then thanked the Committee for the many meetings concerning this and the Moreton Show Stand. After some misgivings, the show stand went ahead with great success. The display was well attended and hopefully some new ringers will follow up in the months ahead. John thanked the following: Mr Gardner for Moreton Show's support; Mr George Dawson for the loan of the Mini-ring; Peter Kenealy for collecting and returning it and overseeing the stand's erection, Richard Lewis-Skeath for the use of his lock up in which to store the Mini-ring; the Secretary for his efforts; and all the others who assisted on the stand during the day, which included those from the Coventry Diocesan Guild. It has been a very busy year with numerous Committee Meetings. He finished by thanking Freda Cleaver and Ken Wakefield for all their support over the years, neither of whom are seeking re-election at this AGM.
- 5 **Guild Master's Report:** Reported that Saturday attendance is very good, despite the occasional tower lock out and an unexpected complaint at Tysoe. Sophia Lewis-Skeath said average attendance is sixteen. She is including new towers that have been over-looked in the past. Steve Bowley reported on the use of the attendance sheet, that the Guild is very active and, unlike other Associations, Saturday practices are well supported. Bill Nash asked about having more 10/12 bell practices. This was discussed and was supported, despite concern that it could dissuade some, but Chris Povey said that there are benefits from ringing just rounds/call changes on 10/12. Sophia agreed to organise this.
- 6 **Treasurer's Report:** Mike Rees presented the Accounts and a discussion took place concerning various aspects. Dinner expenses for the guests: it was agreed that the Judges and Speaker to receive a free dinner (not their partners), as

£120 is expensive. Newsletter costs are lower, due to having only three issues in 2008. Chris Povey mentioned the present costs of the Newsletter at about 55p each (£2.20 per year per member for 4 issues), leaving c.80p to cover insurance and any other expenses. This aspect needs discussion as to a future subscription increase, as we may only be able to afford 3 issues with the present £3.00 subscription. But overall, 2008 about average. Replica shield costs will be added to 2009. The expenses for 2009 will also be higher due to the Centenary and Moreton Show stand and this was highlighted with the provisional expenses of about £300. The Vice-President's Tours fund was then discussed (£1425). Mike said that Mrs Phyllis Brazier runs it and forwards the profit to the Treasurer. Previously these funds were divided four ways to the respective County Associations. Peter Kenealy suggested it be split five ways, with a fifth to the Guild. Chris Povey asked whether this money was Guild money, and, if so, why wasn't it controlled by the Committee? He was told it was Guild money, but that its control had been a matter of custom for some years. Peter Quinn said the Committee should look at this aspect with a remit to clarify and formalise the arrangement, and this was agreed. Chris Righton asked why these funds are detailed as a liability. Mike Rees said that they are being held, for eventual distribution. Bill Nash mentioned subscriptions again. Peter Kenealy said out of 238 listed members only 136 have so far had paid (119 in 2008). John Kinchin said it is the Tower Captain's responsibility to collect the subs and get them paid, but some don't have a Captain. Chris Povey said that it is the responsibility of all Members to settle up. Peter Kenealy said it is so much easier to have it in one lump sum from a Tower. Chris Povey suggested a Newsletter cut-off date if subs aren't paid by then. The Committee will continue to look at this aspect.

- 7 **Election of President:** The Guild Master took the Chair for this Election. John Nicholls was proposed by Chris Povey and seconded by Mike Rees. This was carried unanimously.
- 8 **Election of Vice Presidents:** John Nicholls resumed the Chair. Following last year's AGM, no change or additions were necessary for Mrs Phyllis Brazier and the Rev Peter Newing. It was said that we can have more than two, but no further proposals were made.

Cont-

## 9 Election of Officers:

Guild Master - Peter Quinn was proposed by Chris Povey and seconded by Peter Kenealy: carried.

Ringling Master – Steve Bowley was willing to stand for one more year. Proposed by Sophia Lewis-Skeath, seconded by Peter Kenealy: carried.

Secretary – Andrew Gunn was proposed by Chris Povey and seconded by Steve Bowley: carried.

Treasurer – Mike Rees was proposed by Chris Povey and seconded by Peter Kenealy: carried.

## 10 Election of the Committee and Honorary

Auditors: The election of the remaining members of the Committee took place. Michael Haynes, Chris Povey, Sophia Lewis-Skeath and Peter Kenealy agreed to continue. With Freda Cleaver and Ken Wakefield not seeking re-election, and Steve Cadd resigning as Newsletter Editor, volunteers were invited to fill these three vacancies. John Nicholls said it would be useful to have somebody from each of the four counties. Jackie Hands was proposed by Sophia Lewis-Skeath and seconded by Steve Bowley, and this was carried. Stuart Cummings was proposed by Michael Haynes and seconded by Jackie Hands, and this was carried. It was agreed that one additional member could be co-opted

at a later date. Bill Nash asked whether we have a Newsletter Editor. John Nicholls asked for a volunteer. John thanked Chris Povey and Sophia Lewis-Skeath for stepping in at the last moment with the last issue. Andrew Gunn asked whether Chris would he be willing to continue doing it with Sophia. Peter Kenealy also offered to assist. Chris will consider this request.

Auditors: no election, but the existing auditors (Doug Carr and Mike Fairfax), proposed by Mike Rees and seconded by Jackie Hands, agreed to continue.

## 11 Results of the Striking Competition – Newing Shield. This was judged by Chris Povey and Richard Lewis-Skeath.

1<sup>st</sup> Mickleton:

2<sup>nd</sup> Ilmington:

3<sup>rd</sup> Moreton-in-Marsh:

The Brazier Competition: no entries this year.

## 12 AOB: Bill Nash said the Saturday practice lists lack tower contacts and telephone numbers. He said these have been useful to him in the past. Sophia Lewis-Skeath replied that many of the contact numbers are not for general distribution, but that the Ringing Master has a copy. Mike Rees suggested listing all members contact details, following the

old directory. John Nicholls said many don't want them published. Chris Povey also raised the Data Protection Act, which may require individual permissions to publish such data. Bill Nash asked about being required to assess the risks for ringing tours, as none had been requested in his previous forty years of organising them. A varied discussion took place, where it was explained that if an accident were to occur and there was no Public Liability in place, he as the organiser could be held personally liable for any claims. It is unsafe to assume that a tower's insurance will fully cover any accident without seeing the details of the policy. Without cover, the Guild and its Officers would be left exposed to potential claims, in addition to any member-to-member claims.

John Nicholls thanked Mr Steve Bowley for all his hard work in organising the day.

Stuart Cummings asked that letters of thanks be sent to Freda and Ken for their work on the Committee.

The Guild Dinner will be held at The Falcon, Stratford-on-Avon, on February 6<sup>th</sup> 2010.

The Meeting closed at 1855 hrs. Ringing then commenced on the Abbey bells.

Andrew Gunn, Hon Secretary.

These Minutes are subject to final acceptance at the 2010 AGM

## 2009 Striking Competition Results:

There were no entries for the Brazier Trophy this year, which was a little disappointing, but the Newing Shield was contested by three towers: Mickleton, Ilmington and Moreton-in-Marsh, plus a scratch band. The judges were Chris Povey and Richard Lewis-Skeath. The results of the contest were:-

Mickleton – the Winners and awarded the Newing Shield.

Rise: 4½ faults; Method: 1 fault; Fall: 1 fault. Total 6½ faults.

1 John Kinchin; 2 Jackie Hands; 3 Chris Righton; 4 David Clark; 5 John Nicholls; 6 Fran Chapman

Ilmington – came 2<sup>nd</sup> and awarded the Spencer Jones Cup.

Rise: 4 faults; Method: 7½ faults; Fall: 11 faults. Total 22½ faults

1 Andrew Gunn; 2 Fran Chapman; 3 Chris Righton; 4 Michael Dane; 5 Bill Nash; 6 Jackie Hands

Moreton-in-Marsh

Rise: 17 faults; Method: 15 faults; Fall: 8 faults. Total 40 faults

1 Andrew Gunn; 2 Sophia Lewis-Skeath; 3 Peter Kenealy; 4 Jane Gilbert; 5 Michael Haynes; 6 Nick Allsopp

Chris Povey gave the results and said nobody disgraced themselves in this contest, as all the ringing was of a high standard. It was just that the standard of some of it was higher than others! Mickleton's performance on the day was outstanding, as their results testify. Competition nerves can affect performances; and of course the errors that inexplicably arise during the test piece are 'just one of those things'. That's all part of the fun – and 'fun' it should be, because no-one will be put against a wall and shot if they muck it up, no-one will have their salary reduced or their job taken away, or even be paid a bonus if they win (unless it's at the pub afterwards).

Chris brought to the attention of the gathering one part of the competition rules, which states: *'The Judges shall take into account the following points in preparing the competition results: ... (b) the selection*

*of methods used in method ringing'*. He said he'd noticed Grandsire Doubles had been used by all the teams in this competition, and that to his certain knowledge this method had been used in the first of the revived Striking Competitions over 30 years ago and throughout the intervening period. He acknowledged we've all been weaned on Grandsire Doubles and love it to bits, but he challenged the frontrunners of this competition to 'push the bar up a bit' by trying something a bit more complicated – Stedman for instance, or Bob Minor even (yes, the competition has had this before with a real, ie non-scratch, team, so don't be afraid you'll break new ground) – to provide a more level playing field for the back runners. The relevant teams should note the method ringing part only contributes one-third of the total marks, so the 'risk' is still relatively small. This rule wasn't taken into account this time (were the judges deficient in not doing so, one might ask, particularly as the operative word in the rule is 'shall?'); but next year....?

*(The Striking Competition Rules now appear on the FSG web-site for those interested. Ed)*

## FSG COMMITTEE MEETING, 3<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER

The new Committee met at Long Compton on December 3<sup>rd</sup> for the first Business Meeting since the AGM. There were the Minutes of many intermediate meetings since the last Business Meeting to confirm, these meetings being those required for organising the various centenary events. Consideration was given to forthcoming events, planned, probable and possible. Those already planned include the Christmas Party and the Annual Dinner. Probables were firmed-up: the Annual Ringing Tour, to be held on July 3<sup>rd</sup>; the Guild Walk on September 18<sup>th</sup>; and the AGM & Striking Comps on October 16<sup>th</sup>. It was decided to defer the Intershires Striking Competition once more. A 'possible' is to run the Minimus Striking Competition again, but on a 5 this time, ie with tenor covering. This was last run in about 1995. There is a trophy for this, the 'Mini Mouse' Trophy, but it has not been seen for some years: where is it? This event is very much a bit of fun and used to be run in an evening. Hopefully it will happen like that again.

Reports from the various Guild officers followed and anything arising from those were discussed. Significant points were: the Treasurer reported a donation of £100; the Membership Secretary outlined progress on collating paid-up members; the Fixture Secretary said the next quarter's towers were almost organised and that these would include a 10-bell tower, some less-common towers and some old favourites; the Child Protection Officer said the Guild's Policy had been reviewed, but was to remain unchanged until implementation of the new law governing CRB checks had moved forward more, and that three Guild members were to be CRB-checked; the Health & Safety Officer said the Guild's Policy had been reviewed but

nothing required change at the moment; the Newsletter Editor said that the next issue was in preparation and was expected to be published in the first week of January. Despite fears of expenditure exceeding income in 2010, it was decided that four issues of the Newsletter should be produced, as has been the case traditionally, rather than three issues per year as recently.

Other items on the agenda tabled for discussion were: possible affiliation to the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR), to which there was unanimous agreement for an investigation into the terms, timescales, etc\*; definition of the FSG name and badge, a seemingly strange subject until it is realised that two forms of the name and two forms of the badge have appeared side-by-side for many years, and that definitive forms are now necessary\*\*; formalisation of the Mid-Week Tours money, as agreed at the AGM (see Minutes); insurance of the Guild's trophies, to which there was agreement; subscription amounts, to which there was general agreement that the amount has to rise and that a proposal for such be placed before the membership at the 2010 AGM; new Guild web-site, which is now being filled nicely with lots of interesting information and for which the Committee expressed its pleasure and thanks to Roland Merrick.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March at Ilmington, 6.30pm start.

In view of the substantial amount of business tabled for discussion this time and the number of decisions that were made, the meeting duration of a few minutes over 2½ hours was little short of remarkable in terms of 'bang for the buck'!

\* In view of the adverse weather on 7<sup>th</sup> January, the intended interim meeting to discuss the issue further was conducted by email and telephone, as substantial discussion had already taken place previously. The decisions by the committee arising from this arrangement were: that the FSG should apply to affiliate to the CCCBR; that the application should be made to be considered by the CCCBR in 2010; and that ratification of these decisions by general consensus was not required.

\*\* The full, definitive name has been agreed as '**The Four Shires Guild Of Bell Ringers**'; the badge has been agreed as the embroidered one (on clothing); the background green will be the darker of the two shades used on the metal badges; the font used for the lettering of the badge will be Times New Roman. The definitive badge appears on the front cover of this Newsletter (and there is a greyscale one, too, in the same style) and this image will be used hereon to represent the Guild. (If anyone needs an image of the guild badge for digital use, Chris Povey can supply in either jpg or pdf formats.)

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## PHYLLIS'S BIRTHDAY QUARTERS

Phyllis Brazier celebrated a very significant birthday on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Two quarter peals were rung, one at Willersey and one at Offenham (cos 'er's 'n Off 'num girl). My 'gentleman's code of conduct' prevents me telling you the number of years involved, but an appropriate number of changes were rung in the Offenham quarter (er, no; it's not 28...).

Phyllis was at each quarter. At Willersey, I understand everyone went to The Bell Inn afterwards for a few rounds of.... coffee!! (Hmmm, it wasn't quite coffee at Offenham ....)

I'm sure all of us send Phyllis our best wishes, and hope she continues for at least as long again!

**Willersey, Glos, 1<sup>st</sup> Dec, 1260 Grandsire Doubles:** David Hammond 1, Doug Bott 2, Mike Fairfax 3, Mark Newbury 4, Robert Chadburn (C) 5, Jane Hammond 6.

Colin Currill took the initiative on the Offenham quarter and organised it, but gallantly stepped aside to allow others to ring. He brought his camera to snap Phyllis and the band after the quarter. Being a film camera, the photo needed developing and printing. Unfortunately the adverse weather prevented Colin getting that done in time, so the photo will appear in the next Newsletter.

**Offenham, Worcs, 4th Dec, 1280 Grandsire Doubles:** John Bolton 1, Doug Bott 2, Claire Penny 3, Steve Bowley 4, Chris Povey (C) 5, John Nicholls 6. Colin Currill is to be associated with this quarter.

For those who might be wondering, 80 changes of Grandsire Doubles can be obtained thus: B, P, S, P repeated (3<sup>rd</sup> observation).

CMP

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**Does anyone know the origin of our highly-academic motto AUDI VIDE TACE, and its meaning? Letters to the Editor on this one, please, so that a short article might result.**

## FSG WALKING TOUR, 26<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER

Allen Turner again organised what has become an Annual Event in the Guild calendar and for the third year running the weather was superb.

Our group consisted of ringers, non-ringers, walkers and non-walkers, this is a day for all to enjoy. Ringing commenced at St David's in Moreton, where we were joined by Rob Stansbury, who took a break from the annual Churchyard Tidy-up to augment the ringing team. The bells handled well and a short touch of Bob Doubles was accomplished before it was time to head off for the start of the walk. Rob Harvey had heard the bells and come across to say hello and wish us well for our day out.

The walk to Longborough took a little over an hour, a gentle gradient mostly over grass land with opportunity for blackberry picking – and very good they were too. Coming in to the village Allen was there to greet us and walk around to the Church, where we were joined by local ringers Anne Bourne from Blockley and tower member, Phillip. A mixture of ringing to suit all those present again took place and then it was back downstairs to the churchyard where picnics were enjoyed in the glorious sunshine. A group of American tourists who had heard the bells were most interested to learn about bellringing and Allen and Ted were in their element advising them!

Then it was on with the packs and the walkers amongst us set off for Bourton-on-the-Hill and excellent views were enjoyed across the Moreton plain out to Brailes Hill, and also fine views of Sezincote House.

The church at Bourton was receiving final decoration for the forthcoming Harvest Festival and the flower arrangements were truly superb – we complimented the arrangers on their skill. Sadly we found the bells a bit of a challenge and were glad they were the last on our tour rather than the first. Very hard work, but never mind. However, when we went to sign the visitors book we were suitably chastened to see that a visiting band in August had rung a touch of some obscure method, the name of which escapes me, which only added to our sense of inadequacy!

The final walk was more or less downhill back to Moreton where some of the walkers were pleased to avail themselves of a local tea shop. It had been a long day and quite tiring, but extremely enjoyable. Many thanks to Allen for researching the route and getting it all booked up for us.

There will be another walking tour next year though Allen has stepped down from being organiser, but has already provided me with the information to put the tour together.

Wendy Mace



"And there they burst upon us, the onion domes"  
(from John Betjeman's description of Sezincote in his "Summoned by Bells")



Approaching Bourton-on-the-Hill



The walkers at Bourton-on-the-Hill: (L to R) Wendy Mace, Allen Turner, Ginny White, Janet Blackwell, Sue Bacon, Anne Bourne, Ted Copson

Two old village worthies, Fred and Bert, were discussing the progress of a young lady who was learning to ring at the local church, particularly as it was among an all-male band.

Bert (*with concern*): "But how's 'er getting on up thurr, Fred, (*then quietly*) with – y'know - the bad language?"

Fred: "Oh, arhh! (*pause*) Got so bad they 'ad to tell 'er to tone it down."

(Thank you, John Middleton)



NO PRIZES FOR GUESSING WHICH WELL-KNOWN  
FSG MEMBER THIS BRINGS TO MIND!!

(Stone face seen on a wall at 'Ye Olde Red Horse' pub in Evesham after a Bell Tower practice, the member in question kindly donating his specs for the photo to make recognition easier.)

Answer on p.15





## THE NEW FSG WEB-SITE ([www.fourshires.org.uk](http://www.fourshires.org.uk))

In recent months we have been putting together a new website for the Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers and it is located at <http://www.fourshires.org.uk/>. The first task was to find a way to incorporate all the material from the existing site by Paul Evans (see <http://homepages.which.net/~paul.evans124shires/>) in such a way that no changes needed to be made. This has been achieved and the look and feel of the site followed that of the existing site so that they would blend seamlessly.

The existing site only dealt with the "Mid-week Outings" organised by the Guild. The new site aims to be more encompassing and deal with more of the needs of the Guild. The first new item was the creation of a Google Calendar for all the Guild events. This is accessible from the new site but for anyone who is a registered user of Google services (e.g. Gmail or iGoogle)

they can access the calendar directly and if they wish to incorporate it directly into their own calendar. A few other items have been added including the October 2009 Newsletter and space for future newsletters.

What next? That is a good question. There are many things that could be done but a truly successful website is one that understands who its users are and what they want from it. We have identified the primary audience of the website as being *you*, the members of the Four Shires Guild. What you want from it is less clear so feedback from the members is invited. The website includes contact information, i.e. [contact@fourshires.org.uk](mailto:contact@fourshires.org.uk)

If we find that the site is valuable to the membership, then we can make

improvements to the infrastructure that underpins it, allowing additional facilities.

Roland Merrick

*(Roland has invited feedback on how the web-site can be improved. It seems very churlish not to use the invitation...)*

*Also, members may be interested in a newly-added web-page, which advertises non-FSG run activities that are likely to be of benefit to members. A good example of this are the excellent educational seminars run at the Harry Windsor Ringing Centre at Kington by Graham Nabb. For further details of these seminars, see the web-site. Ed)*

### **MISSING NEWSLETTERS**

**This is a plea for help from the Guild's Archivist (him wot looks after all the old stuff). Some of the Newletters in the Guild's collection are missing. These are:- nos 25, 86, 87, 91, 92, 93, 96, 97, 98 & 101. Does anyone have any of these issues and be prepared to donate them to the collection? If so, speak to Peter Kenealy, or Andrew Gunn (contact details on page 2).**

## CHRISTMAS PARTY 2009, CHERINGTON

The Guild Christmas Party took place at Cherington Village Hall on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December. It was preceded by ringing at St. John the Baptist's Church, on the delightful light ring of six there.

The weather that night was cold: in fact, very cold! There had been some snow previously and the temperature was well below freezing. The heaters in the hall struggled.... By gosh, it was authentic Christmas stuff!

The party was essentially the product of two 'managers': Peter K organised the ringing, venue and associated hardware; and Sophia Lewis-Skeath sorted the food/drink side and those nice, homely, little bits no man can ever think of, or hope to arrange. (Come along gents; you know this is right.... Would Christmas happen if we had to arrange it?).

As this was the Centenary Christmas Party, it was decided that a suitable cake would be appropriate. Andrew Gunn liaised with Fiesta Caterers at Wickhamford, who produced a cake that had a photo of Todenham Church and two FSG badges on the top that were made from edible rice paper and edible coloured inks. It was decorated with small bells. It was spectacular, as the photos on the

following page show. Well done, Andrew!

It was a shame comparatively few members came. The nasty, cold weather may have been a consideration. However, you should be aware that you missed the Christmas Fairy in her strapless dress (but she just had to be horribly cold) and the irrepressible Jackie in her mini dress with lacy, see-through extension (and she must have been cold, too. But did either of them show it? Not even a little bit. Female grit: terrifying!).

The evening proceeded with some drinks and then with the food/nibbles. Helen Povey brought warm mulled wine in vacuum flasks. This was popular in getting some heat back into bodies!

Then the cake was paraded in, with candles lit, and was justly admired by all there. Rob Harvey and John Nicholls showed us they still have enough puff between them to blow out four candles (although some of us thought it might be a close-run thing, and wondered whether oxygen masks were available). It was suggested the committee members there should be photographed behind this remarkable, although temporary, bit of Guild history, and such occurred. After this, the cake

was cut by Jackie and John (but how did you manage to cut your finger with the knife, John? Were you distracted?)

To get us all going with a bit of gusto, carols around the piano, just like the old days (so the writer has been told), was next on the agenda. This proved to be very popular, with many carols sung and everybody joining in. You may not have realised it, but Rob Harvey has a very fine singing voice!

There were carols on handbells, organised by Richard (see his advert on p.12). Chris Povey brought along his set of 12 bells, which had returned from full refurbishment only the previous day and were still wrapped up in their protective paper. He said they needed a memorable event for their first use, and this was as good as any. So he unwrapped them and the shiny, like-new bells were used.

The final event was the raffle, for which Committee members had provided the prizes. This was successful in that most people took home a prize!

So ended the 2009 Centenary Christmas Party. See the photos on the following page.

# 2009 CHRISTMAS PARTY, THE PHOTOS



Robin Hands, Steve Bowley, Robin Walker and 'the irreplaceable' Jackie



Peter Kenealy, Sophia & Richard Lewis-Skeath, Michael Haynes, Maureen & David Adams, John Nicholls



Helen Povey, Rob Harvey, Andrew Gunn



Allen Turner, Paul Marriott



No, your eyes don't deceive!



The superb FSG Christmas Cake



The Christmas fairy



The cake is brought in by Andrew



Rob and John blow out the candles



Most of the committee (plus Stuart C earlier)



Jackie and John cutting the cake



Carols round the piano



Robin W tickling the ivories



President and Hon Sec in full cry



Carols on Chris's newly-refurbished bells



Paul gives it a try

## TOWER OF THE QUARTER

The first in what is hoped will be a regular feature that spotlights one tower from those visited in the recent quarter's Saturday night practices, which, in the Newsletter team's opinion, deserves singling out for a

special mention. This feature might adorn the front page, or, as this issue where a more-appropriate front-page article is applied, an inside page. The choice this time is:-

### ST MARY'S, TEMPLE GUITING, GLOS



Photo: Chris Povey

The recent work here appears to have paid dividends, as the bells were rung afterwards on three separate occasions during a two-week period, and then a little later for a quarter peal – possibly more ringing than at any time in the last 10 years! Four of the ropes were changed for good second-hand ones (the old ones were poor), a stay was replaced, the tenor clapper swing was trued up and the Ringing Room had its first vacuuming in very many years (it was horribly filthy). First of the ringing was the FSG Saturday practice on Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>, then Sunday morning ringing by request for the Rector's last Service on the 11<sup>th</sup> and finally the FSG Mid-week Tour visited on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The quarter-peal was rung in fine style on November 6<sup>th</sup> for Sophia Lewis-Skeath's birthday (see page 15 for details).

The 5 bells, tenor 11-3-17 in F#, were cast by Taylors of Loughborough in 1870/71, but the 3<sup>rd</sup> was recast by them in 1905. Taylors rehung them in a new 6-bell cast-iron and steel bellframe in 1971, so the 'real' treble's pit lies there unfilled. Perhaps one day..... (The belfry is very large: enough room for a 12 on one level!) Lack of a local band and tight PCC finances have led to the bells being overlooked in the past – and by ringers generally, too, it seems (when did the FSG last visit, for instance?) - but the recent work has now made them nicely ringable. Don't expect to push them along, though, as they seem happier ringing fairly slowly. (Now if they were a 6... !)

(See: <http://www.ringing.demon.co.uk/towers/glos.htm#T>)

### FSG Clothing:

A reminder that FSG clothing is still available. All items have the FSG badge embroidered on the left breast and come in many colours. The Centenary badge was used for all items to the end of December. If you missed that version (a collector's item in years to come), it's gone forever. More detailed descriptions of these products are available on

the FSG website: [www.fourshires.org.uk](http://www.fourshires.org.uk). (I'm sure the FSG ladies could do a far better job of modelling these products than these blokes..... What do you think, gents.....? How about it, ladies.....?)



Sweatshirts £14.50



Reversible fleeces £24.50



Polo Shirt £12.50

Payment is cash/cheque made out to Four Shires Guild of Bell Ringers with order to:-

Peter Quinn,  
22 Mountford Close,  
Wellesbourne,  
Warwick. CV35 9QQ

Tel: 01789-840827,  
Mobile: 07785-793500,  
Email [peter@quinn22.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:peter@quinn22.fsnet.co.uk)

## NOTICES & ADVERTS

### GUILD ANNUAL DINNER SATURDAY, 6<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2010

The Annual Dinner will be held at The Legacy Falcon Hotel, Chapel Street, Stratford-on-Avon,  
7.00 for 7.30pm.

#### Menu

Creamy Leek & Potato Soup with Chives

Or

Chicken Liver Pate, Homemade Chutney and Toasted Brioche

\*\*\*\*\*

Roast Loin of Pork, Sage Stuffing, Prune and Apple Compote, Cider Gravy

Or

Supreme of Chicken filled with Brie and Sun Dried Tomato Mousse, and Plum Tomato Coulis.

All served with Seasonal Vegetables & Potatoes

Or

Mushroom and Feta Cheese open Ravioli

\*\*\*\*\*

Lemon Tart, Crème Chantilly, Red Fruits

Or

Sticky Toffee Pudding and Toffee Sauce

\*\*\*\*\*

Freshly Brewed Tea or Coffee with Minted Chocolates

Cost of Dinner £21.00

Please let either John Nicholls on 01386 841084 or Peter Quinn on 01789 840827 know  
your choice of menu by Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2010

The guest speaker will be Mr Steve Coleman

The striking competition cups and trophies will also be presented

## ADVERTS:



**Handbell ringers wanted!!** I am in the process of setting up a tune-ringing handbell team and am looking for ringers who might be interested in joining. Previous experience of ringing handbells is not necessary, but a good sense of rhythm and the ability to read staff notation would be an advantage, although this can be taught if required.

I am also seeking to obtain a suitable set of handbells, preferably at least 1½ octaves (12+ bells). I would be grateful to hear from anyone who knows of a set that might be available on a mid-long term loan/hire basis. Maybe your church has a set that has been unused for a while (perhaps in a box in the ringing chamber?) and would benefit from some regular use?

Also, are there any existing teams within our area, whether church based, community, private group, etc.? Maybe you're in a team that rings just occasionally for fun or you go round the village at Christmas collecting for charity? I'm hoping to organise an informal rally if there are enough teams interested.

**Method on handbells.** For some time now I have been keen to form a small group of ringers to ring some simple methods on handbells – several ringers I know have had a go at plain hunting in the past (maybe at the 'Bellringers Christmas Dinner' or some similar function) but have never had the opportunity to progress any further. Have you had a go before or would you like to give it a try? Most ringers can master plain hunt within a short time and Plain Bob Minor is not impossible either!!

Please contact me by e-mail or phone if you are interested in joining either (or both!) of the above teams, or can help with sourcing any handbells. Richard Lewis-Skeath: 07747-802555; 01608-652789; handbell.ringer@btinternet.com .



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

There has been a hefty response to the Four Shire Stone article in the last Newsletter:-

Dear Chris,

I was interested in your article on the Four Shire Stone; someone may have beaten me to it, but I thought you might like these copies of recently drawn maps\* based on the old ones. In his 'Ways & Waymarks in the Four Shires' book (1980) Peter Drinkwater has a 10 page chapter on it, suggesting the present Stone might have succeeded an earlier one, possibly a Roman milestone. He then surmises that the present Stone might have been erected in the early 17<sup>th</sup>.C by Sir Baptist Hicks, Viscount Campden, as it is in similar style to some of his other buildings in Chipping Campden, though the present top ball and sundial are not original. Presumably the local Parish Council would know who repaired it recently. PD reckons that if it were not a Roman milestone, it was probably a large natural stone, like one of the Rollrights, but certainly large and distinguished enough to be recorded as a marker in Henry VIII's time. Hope this helps. Yours sincerely, Peter Richardson, The Old Rectory, Halford.

*\* the maps confirm the Blockley 'finger' and also that the following parishes met at the Stone: Blockley (Worcs), and clockwise from there; Lemington (Glos), Todenham (Glos) - possibly, Great Wolford (Warks), Barton-on-the-Heath (Warks) until 1725, Little Compton (Glos), Chastleton (Oxon), Evenlode (Worcs), Moreton-in-Marsh (Glos), Batsford (Glos). Thank you for your reply, Peter. The Stone clearly marks a location of some importance, but for what reason, one wonders? The boundaries from so many parishes must have been an administrative nightmare. CMP*

Dear Chris,

I was interested in your piece on the Four Shire Stone in the last newsletter. I was first shown it around 60 years ago, at which time one could enter the gate and walk all round it and 'claim' to have been in four counties. Around 40 years ago I read a piece in, I think, the Warwickshire and Worcestershire magazine where it was stated that the Stone marked the site of an ancient battle fought between the Saxons and the Danes as part of the campaign to drive the Danes out of the country, and that the Shire boundaries of central England broadly marked the stages by which this was accomplished. The actual battle was indecisive, as the Saxons were tricked by a traitor who had gone over to the Danish side. Seeing that the Saxons appeared to be winning and noticing that a man near to him bore a marked resemblance to the Saxon leader, he cut off the man's head and held it aloft, calling to the Saxons to behold their slain leader. The Saxon army faltered and although their leader quickly rallied them the damage was done and neither side was able to

claim a victory on this occasion. The significance of this to the Stone is that the present one is probably a replacement for a much earlier one possibly dating from the 10<sup>th</sup> century when the battle was fought. My guess for the date of the present one is 18<sup>th</sup> century but I'm no expert! Best regards, Bill Hicks.

*Thank you for your mail, Bill. It's interesting you mention significant battles and the 10<sup>th</sup> century, as a web-site I came across recently, which hopes to be 'the definitive history of the Stone', mentions both these aspects. The site is: [www.hunimex.com/warwick/four\\_shire\\_stone.html](http://www.hunimex.com/warwick/four_shire_stone.html).*

*It contains some good photos, and shows the Stone is Listed (Grade II), gaining this accolade in 1966 (LBS ref 305989). CMP.*

Dear Chris,

I was most interested to read your article on the Four Shire Stone in the FSG magazine. I have always been vaguely curious about the subject and this spurred me on to do a bit of research. Unfortunately, I am unable to answer any of your three intrinsic questions, viz, who built the FSS and when, and who's currently responsible for its upkeep (although the latter shouldn't be too difficult to ascertain: I think Peter K is working on this one). What a mystery! But.... I have uncovered all sorts of information concerning parish boundaries, which may or may not interest you. So here goes. Firstly, one has to be sceptical about historical sources until one studies the original Ordnance Survey map of 1828, for which the first field surveys were carried out between 1811 and 1817. This was executed very professionally by huge teams of surveyors and draughtsmen, and can be taken as very reliable. Although it does not show parish boundaries, in the case of Blockley it is fortuitously covered by the county boundary as one and the same thing. Maps by Smith, Cary, Teesdale, Monk, etc, are all early 19<sup>th</sup>C and thus fairly contemporary with the original OS. Your article states that Teesdale's map shows Worcestershire (ie, Blockley) reaching 'about a couple of miles to the west of the Stone, immediately north of Moreton'. In actual fact, the nearest point is about 600 yards immediately east of Moreton. Incidentally many of the early mapmakers plagiarised one another and any inaccuracies were thus perpetuated. Anyway, well before 1828, Blockley (Dorn) did not reach the FSS (but it did until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup>C as you will see later).

One or two points about Dr Iceley's book:- Introduction, p.xvii - "Record of beating of bounds by Dr Erasmus Saunders (vicar) of 26<sup>th</sup> May 1720 mentions 'ye Four Shire Stone'" (that's fine) but his map on p.vi to illustrate this dates the event to 1721 and is "based on the OS map". Dr Iceley's book actually contains a photograph of the 1828 OS map, which clearly shows Blockley not reaching the FSS. Nowhere does he

acknowledge this. Page xviii: the parliamentary account of the boundary is reckoned to be about 12 miles. Dr Iceley expresses surprise at this low mileage and estimates it over 20 miles. He should have known a mile in that era was roughly equivalent to 1½ modern miles. ("Chains" with a similar ratio were used in the Vale of Evesham as late as the 19<sup>th</sup>C). Page xx - footnote 1: "Dorn and the narrow tongue of land reaching to FSS was transferred to the parish of Batsford in 1935." Dorn hadn't been contiguous with the FSS for well over 100 years! (Incidentally, assuming that the 1935 date is correct, I think this could have happened because Moreton Aerodrome was being planned and the MOD would not have wanted a parish boundary crossing it: this is just a personal conjecture of mine - it might be worth following up).

Back to the Stone. .. Most of the following information is gleaned from Peter Drinkwater's book "Ways & Waymarks in the Four Shires", and I can sum up briefly what he has to tell us. PD speculates about an earlier Stone but the earliest maps to show the Stone were the Hyckes's tapestries of 1580's, which depict it as "a grey square with a circle in the centre." PD is inclined to think this relates to the current Stone. (Saxton's beautiful maps of 1579 are highly stylized and do not show the Stone) Next come Ogilby's road maps of 1675. The first impression mentions the FSS and the second shows a crude sketch corresponding to the present stone. In 1662 a private survey for local landowner Sir Robt. Pye contains a map of Dorn showing a long narrow projection of fields, complete with names, reaching to the FSS ending in "Bartonstile" (Barton then reached to FSS but not now) but the Stone itself is not mentioned. (I shall refer to this map later.) Next come Beighton's maps of 1725, which show all sorts of changes. PD shows these on his map, but he has admitted to me that Beighton can't be relied on. Samuel Rudder, antiquarian, of 1779 mentions the FSS in his survey of Little Compton - "inscriptions on four sides", also of Batsford and Moreton - "a handsome pedestal about 12ft high with a [sun]dial on top and an inscription to inform travellers that "This is the Four Shire Stone"" (Rudder did not cover Worcestershire, so Blockley doesn't get a mention.) (Incidentally, Little Compton was transferred from Gloucestershire to Warwickshire in 1844, and Blockley and

(cont)

Evenlode to Gloucestershire on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1931. Little Compton is in the Diocese of Oxford and has a Gloucestershire post-code although still in Warks!) Soon after the 1870s, the inscription had become badly weathered, an indication in itself of the great age of the Stone, considering that it was constructed of top quality stone. The column was refurbished and refaced, and inscribed with the lettering that we see now. Who was responsible for this I do not know. On p.35 of his book, PD states that "Blockley's ancient claim (to extend to the old Landmark) was given up by the local 'lugubrii' of the early 19thC, who allowed the [the last field] to be transferred to Batsford and obliterated. They received in exchange a small triangle of land, which, added to the south side of [the last but one] field, brought it closer to the theoretical rectangle. [This] is pencilled in on the old Pye map of 1662". PD tells me this dates to about 1800. Why this should have taken place is a mystery to me. Of course, as previously stated,

the first OS map confirms this. Incidentally, I have a pre-WW2 OS map of the area. Dorn's narrow strip (then in Batsford) can be picked out and the ancient field boundaries exactly correspond with Pye's map (excepting of course the last field, which had become part of a coppice called Ellis' Plantation). I find that quite remarkable. By the War most of this strip was lost forever under Moreton Aerodrome.

It was evidently very important for all these parishes (nine in all) to extend to the FSS. The marshy heath (Henmarsh) was originally a 'No Man's Land' held in common by a number of places. Why the convergence of the four shires, which was an important political meeting place (Guildborough) in 969AD, should be situated in the middle of a marsh beats me.

I must stress my research is of an amateur nature. I hope it doesn't contain too many errors. It has certainly posited more questions than answers. Such is life! Yours, Paul Marriott, The Old Forge, Cherington.

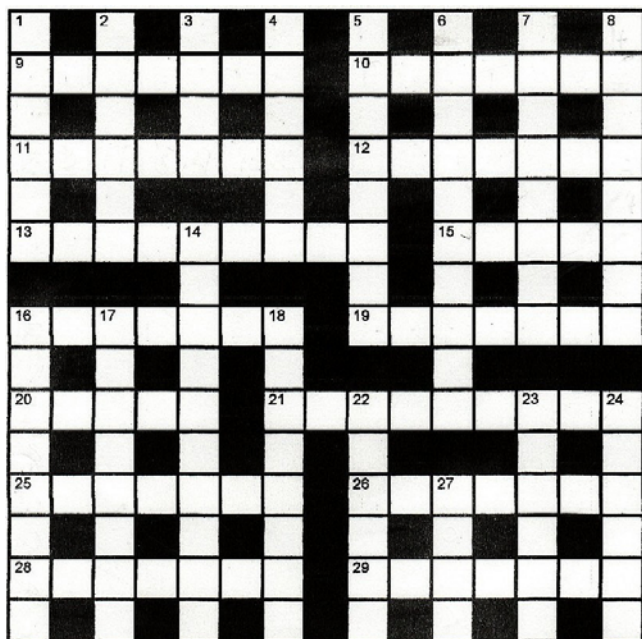
*Paul also refers to the map in Peter Drinkwater's book that Peter Richardson mentions above, and lists the parishes. Thank you, Paul, for this extremely fascinating and deeply-researched explanation of the boundary changes over the centuries at what is clearly a very important location in our area. CMP*

Dear Chris: a belated reply to your question in the Guild Newsletter. A friend found the following in the Lych Gate collection of history: English Heritage list, National Monument Ref 10E 130 222 (from web-site). This may throw some light on the Stone. Mrs Helen Bennett, Kingspring House, Long Compton.

*Thank you for this information, Helen. CMP*

Good to see there are no letters about the Guild and its activities, as this indicates everything is OK on those fronts..... Ed

## THE PRESIDENT'S CROSSWORD



### Across

- 9 Roughly shore up stretched Stedman (7)
- 11 Is a dope abnormal to find this unsightly tissue? (7)
- 13 A Great clue. (9)
- 16 Describes 8 (7)
- 20 A primary colour in the Football Association for a well-known ringer (5)
- 25 The first title of George the First (7)
- 28 This follows 20 (7)

- 10 Jollification (7)
- 12 How we find W.P.N more than most! (7)
- 15 The finish W.P.N. likes (5)
- 19 Usually the site of 11 (7)
- 21 Our friends stripping off on holiday! (9)
- 26 This must surely be W.P.N's study of Roman Engineering! (7)
- 29 Little Bob with regard to Plain Bob (7)

### Down

- 1 My boy, at a loose end/Find a piece of music (6)
- 2 Join methods or ropes (6)
- 3 Star changes his head for nothing (4)
- 4 One must do this before ringing at Chipping Campden (6)
- 5 Presumably in the judge's mind before the striking competition (8)
- 6 W.P.N's least favourite person (10)
- 7 Bogus mail bins lacking pigment (8)
- 8 H. (8)
- 14 Describes 20 and 23 (10)
- 16 In the open air (8)
- 17 Where would one find a 72cwt bell hung for full-circle ringing? (8)
- 18 Describes our secretary (8)
- 22 A manoeuvre in eg, Grandsire (6)
- 23 Queen of George I (6)
- 24 Grasp here to find an orb (6)
- 27 Well and truly dead! (4)

Answers by post to Il Presidente at address on page 2 by February 1<sup>st</sup> 2010. Mark envelope 'FSG crossword'

The first correct answer opened after this date wins the first prize of a night out with John at the pub. Answers in next Newsletter.

## AROUND THE TOWERS

### QUARTER PEALS, ETC:-

**Badsey, Worcs**, 14<sup>th</sup> Aug, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: John Bolton [Emma] 1, Doug Bott [Gemma] 2, Robert Hall [Chloe] 3, Tom Sandham [William] 4, Martin Penny [Benjamin] (C) 5, Gordon Hill [Ella] 6. A Grandfathers quarter; rung to celebrate all our Grandchildren and especially William, born 5th July 2009, and Chloe, born 9th August 2009.



After the Q, L-R: John Bolton, Martin Penny, Tom Sandham, Robert Hall, Gordon Hill, Doug Bott. (*Ah, that shorts and tee-shirt weather..... Ed*)

**Long Compton, Warks**, 5th Oct, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: Janet Blackwell 1 (1st quarter), Michael Cummings 2 (1st inside), Trevor Hobday 3, John Nicholls (C) 4, Peter Kenealy 5, Stuart Cummings 6. Rung to celebrate Long Compton winning Calor Village of the Year for Warwickshire.

**Bretforton, Worcs**, 24<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: John Kinchin 1, Jackie Hands 2, Doug Bott 3, John Nicholls (C) 4, George Osborn 5, Colin Curriell 6. Rung to celebrate the 49<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of Mr G Hall (Tower Captain) & Mrs Hall.

**Temple Guiting, Glos**, 6<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1350 Doubles (Stedman, Grandsire, Rev St Bart's, Plain, St Simon's, April Day): Jackie Hands 1, Sophia Lewis-Skeath 2, John Nicholls 3, Chris Povey (C) 4, Richard Lewis-Skeath 5. To celebrate Sophia's mildly-significant birthday this day.

**Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos**, 8<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1280 Cambridge S Major: Keith Murphy 1, Charles Wilson 2, Chris Mew (C) 3, Chris Povey 4, Mark Sayers 5, Richard Lewis-Skeath 6, John Nicholls 7, Peter Quinn 8. 1<sup>st</sup> Treble Bob: 1. For Evensong.

**Mickleton, Glos**, 16<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1280 Lincolnshire S Major: Jackie Hands 1, Diana Reeves 2, Sophia Lewis-Skeath 3, Chris Mew (C) 4, Richard Lewis-Skeath 5, Alan Hartley 6, John Nicholls 7, Robert Reeves 8. 1<sup>st</sup> blows of Lincolnshire: 3

**Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos**, 7<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1250 Superlative S Major: Robert Reeves 1, Sophia Lewis-Skeath 2, Chris Mew (C) 3, Peter Quinn 4, Mark Sayers 5, Alan Hartley 6, John Nicholls 7, Richard Lewis-Skeath 8. 1<sup>st</sup> blows of Superlative: 2.



Ilmington & Mickleton ringers on Christmas morning at Ilmington. L-R (with headgear!): Mike Fairfax, Pam McFarlane, Andrew Gunn, Jackie Hands, Bill Nash, Nicola Amphlett, Bill Sabin, John Kinchin.

**Kirtlington, Oxon**, 30<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1260 Grandsire Triples: Richard Lewis-Skeath 1, Robin Green 2, Isobel Murphy 3, Joanna Murphy (C) 4, Steve Bowley 5, Joe Johnson 6, Keith Murphy 7, Bill Nash 8. 1<sup>st</sup> as conductor: 4. For Joanna's 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday (on Christmas Day)

**Islip, Oxon**, 30<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1296 Plain Bob Major: Steve Bowley 1, Joe Johnson 2, Joanna Murphy 3, Isobel Murphy 4, Robin Green 5, Keith Murphy 6, Bill Nash 7, Richard Lewis-Skeath (C) 8. 1<sup>st</sup> Major: 2 & 4.

### TOWER NEWS:

Michael and Stuart Cummings at **Brailles** had a worrying time during the demise of Taylor Eayre & Smith, as they had sent the tenor's broken clapper up there for repair. They heard the Administrator was impounding everything until a clearer picture of the business could be gauged, and half-expected this was the last that would be seen of the clapper, or at least for some time. However, phone calls to and from TESCO confirmed it was still in existence and that the repair would be undertaken and the clapper refitted before the company was sold, which is what happened. The new clapper is a wooden-shafted one. The great William Blews tenor, the largest bell he ever cast, booms out once more.

**Blockley** bells have been given an inspection by Whites of Appleton, who undertake regular maintenance there. They recommend major work to the bells, as the fittings are becoming life-expired. In addition, they recommend the Bond of

Burford bellframe should be renewed, as the design is a poor one (although no cracks appear in the tower). The bellframe arrangement at Blockley is unusual, as the metal part is a single-layer framework of steel beams, upon which the bells are hung directly. There are no sideframes. The slider gear and pulleys are mounted on the lower beams and cills of the old, quite-separate, wooden bellframe beneath. This arrangement was clearly a cheap bodge-up at the time, but it has lasted without major ill-effect for a surprisingly long period. There is an option to retain the frame arrangement when the bells are rehung, or bite the bullet and go for a new 'proper' one at extra expense. Nothing is likely to drop off at the moment, so the PCC have a little time to think about this and decide what they wish to do, and when. Nonetheless, there will be a big bill eventually.

The tenor clapper at **Norton** broke just before Christmas, ensuring no ringing on all 8 bells over that period. Luckily, no damage to anything else seems to have occurred, which is fortunate. Clappers that go wandering around belfries on their own can do lots of damage. The break occurred right at the top of the shank, next to the pivot eye, so a straightforward forge-welded repair isn't possible. If they want to retain the wrought-iron clapper, then it is likely to mean a newly-forged or good second-hand top-end. The other solution is a completely new spheroidal-graphite (SG) iron clapper. Hopefully, the clapper problem will be sorted before the Guild's meeting here on March 20<sup>th</sup>!

*Please let me have any information about what's happening in towers in the area. Ed*

# DIARY OF GUILD SATURDAY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Jan 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>EVESHAM</b> , Worcs, The Bell Tower	12, 35-2-20 in C#	
Jan 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>CHURCHILL</b> , Oxon	8, 10-3-9 in G	<b>(7.00 – 8.30pm)</b>
Jan 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>LOWER QUINTON</b> , Warks	6, 13-0-27 in F# (GF)	
Jan 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>STOW-ON-THE-WOLD</b> , Glos	8, 27-2-24 in D	
Jan 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>WINCHCOMBE</b> , Glos	8, 11-2-11 in F#	
Feb 6 <sup>th</sup>	No Practice: <b>GUILD ANNUAL DINNER</b> , Stratford-upon-Avon (see p. 12)		
Feb 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>UPPER SLAUGHTER</b> , Glos	5, 13-0-14 in G# (GF)	
Feb 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>CHIPPING NORTON</b> , Oxon	8, 14-1-4 in F#	
Feb 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>SNITTERFIELD</b> , Warks	6, 16-1-13 in F	
Mar 6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>STRATFORD-UPON-AVON</b> , Warks	10, 19-0-2 in E	
	(Beware of the narrow spiral staircase and the three close-together steps half-way up!)		
Mar 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>OFFENHAM</b> , Worcs	6, 10-3-2 in F#	(GF) <b>(7.00 – 8.30pm)</b>
Mar 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>NORTON</b> , Worcs	8, 12-3-26 in F# (GF)	
Mar 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>GREAT WOLFORD</b> , Warks	6, 11-3-7 in F#	
Apr 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>BRAILES</b> , Warks	6, 29-0-19 in C	(the 3 <sup>rd</sup> heaviest ring of 6 in the world!)
Apr 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>BIDFORD-ON-AVON</b> , Warks	8, 14-0-24 in F (GF)	
Apr 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>BOURTON-ON-THE-HILL</b> , Glos	6, 11-1-27 in F	
Apr 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>SALFORD PRIORS</b> , Warks	8, 15-0-14 in F# (GF)	

For any alterations to this programme, check the new FSG web-site (<http://www.fourshires.org.uk>), or Campanophile's diary (<http://www.campanophile.co.uk>). The Calendar part of the FSG web-site gives further information about each Saturday night tower (just single-click the tower name), including a location map.

**Meetings are from 7.30pm until 9.00pm unless otherwise stated.** All are welcome. You don't have to be a FSG member and we are especially pleased if members of the local band wish to come along and ring.

A wide range of ringing is undertaken at these practices, so something will appeal to your ability – or your desire to try something a bit more difficult. Practices have been well-attended recently, so this indicates a marked success in getting the right balance.

The Guild carries Public Liability insurance through the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group for all its activities. Non-members attending these activities are also covered by this insurance, providing they abide fully by the Guild's Health & Safety and Child Protection policies, both are which are due to appear on the FSG web-site very soon, so their contents will be available to all, whether members or non-members.

## TAG-END:

**Please, please remember subscriptions are due on 1<sup>st</sup> January. The Treasurer (Mike Rees) or the Membership Secretary (Peter Kenealy) will be happy to take your money in exchange for a little bit of paper called a receipt. The subscription rate is £3, which is unlikely to break anybody's bank. To assist in paying quickly, there is a detachable payment slip with this issue.**

**Peter Kenealy and John Nicholls had minor operations immediately before Christmas, Peter on a knee and John for a cataract. Reports suggest both ops were successful. Our best wishes to Peter and John in their convalescences and hope things progress as they should.**

**Where is the 'Mini-Mouse' (Minimus Striking Competition) Trophy? There is a rumour it may be at Stratford. Wherever it is, can it be returned, please (to any of the Committee members), as it will be required for the competition that will be held later this year.**

**NOTE: dates set for events in 2010 are:-**

**Guild Ringing Tour: Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July**  
**Autumn Walk: Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September**  
**Guild AGM & Striking Comps: Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October**  
**Get them in your diary now!!**